



1Matthias Stom (1600-1652) - young reader

## AVON LOCAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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### ALHA ITEMS

#### NEW ALHA MEMBER - THORNBURY U3A

Welcome to new ALHA member **Thornbury University of the Third Age**, which has 40 members. Other U3A groups that have found membership of ALHA of use include **Norton-Radstock**, **Shepton Mallet** and **Sodbury**.

#### ALHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND JOE BETTEY LECTURE 2019

**Notice of the AGM and the Joe Bettey lecture accompanies this update.** The venue is the **St Michael's Centre, Stoke Gifford**, and the date is **Saturday 5 October 2019, starting at 2pm. AGM at 2pm, refreshments at 2.30, and the lecture at 3.00.** The AGM papers should include the agenda, the minutes of the 2018 meeting, the secretary's report for 2018-2019, and the accounts, which have been kindly examined by Mike Leigh. To assist with refreshments, could attenders please fill in the booking form and return it to the secretary, by e-mail or on paper.

The Joe Bettey lecture will be delivered by Dr Madge Dresser, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, UWE, after many years as an Associate Professor in Social and Cultural

British History. Her lecture is titled *Landscapes of slavery - some new reflections on investigating Bristol and the wider Atlantic slave economy*. The lecture will start at 3pm and is free.

### **ALHA GRANTS PANEL**

The committee needs to appoint one or two more members to the small panel which looks at applications for grants and makes recommendations to the committee. The work involves reading and commenting on two or three applications a year. It takes up to 3 or 4 hours in all, and the timing depends on when applications come in. They are circulated by e-mail, and the panel members discuss them by e-mail or telephone, so no meetings or postage are involved. Panel members who are not already members of the ALHA committee are however welcome to attend when an application is discussed.

You do not have to be a member of the committee to undertake this role. It does not require any training or special skill, though obviously some understanding of or interest in local history or archaeology would help. It might particularly interest treasurers of ALHA members groups and societies, though financial expertise is not necessary.

If you can help, or would like to recommend anyone the committee could approach, could you please contact the treasurer, [wm.evans@bopenworld.com](mailto:wm.evans@bopenworld.com), 0117 968 4979, or the secretary, [blackrockcfd@hotmail.com](mailto:blackrockcfd@hotmail.com), 01275 849200

## **EVENTS AND SOURCES**

### **IRIS MURDOCH**

Dr Miles Leeson, Director of the Iris Murdoch Research Centre of the University of Chichester, lectures on *Iris Murdoch, Badminton School and Fiction*, **Thursday 3 October 2019 17:30-18:30** at **Badminton School**, Westbury Road, Westbury on Trym, Bristol BS9 3BA. Celebrates the centenary of IM, who attended the school. Entry is FREE and refreshments will be provided, but booking is required via Eventbrite, [www.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk)

### **FUTURE OF THE MENDIP HILLS AONB**

ALHA member the **Mendip Society**, the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of British Geographers host a talk by Jim Hardcastle, manager of the AONB Unit, titled "*The good, the bad and the alarming*". JH will explain the future management of the Mendip Hills AONB; his theme will be with an insight into the future of this protected historic landscape. No charge for entry but donations to the Mendip Hills Fund are requested. **Wednesday 6 November 2019, Wells & Mendip Museum**, 8 Cathedral Green, Wells BA5 2UE. Doors open **6.30pm**. Teas/coffee/biscuits available. Parking is limited outside the museum, with some bays for disable people. There is normally ample free parking within the City after 6pm. There is a limit to seating in the Museum, so advanced booking is required on [les.davies@westcountryman.co.uk](mailto:les.davies@westcountryman.co.uk) / Tel 01458 445233.

### **PRISONS**

*Dr Elaine Saunders writes:* I write on behalf of Dr Rosalind Crone of The Open University who created the *19th Century Prisons* database at [www.prisonhistory.org](http://www.prisonhistory.org) in 2018. This project has recently been updated and extended and, we believe, will be of even greater interest to local historians.

Alongside the *19<sup>th</sup> Century Prisons* database ([www.prisonhistory.org/19th-century-prisons/](http://www.prisonhistory.org/19th-century-prisons/)), which provides a searchable list of 847 prisons and their archives, Rosalind Crone has developed **Your Local Lock-Up**; a public engagement project which aims to locate any structures used for temporary imprisonment or restraint.



These lock-ups might have confined the accused until they appeared before a local magistrate, when being moved between penal institutions, or when undergoing trial. Some lock-ups, like stocks, could also have been used to punish those ‘behaving badly’ in the local community.

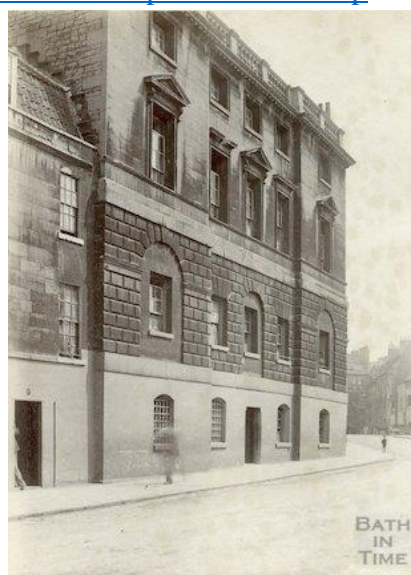
By Linda Bailey, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4825946>

Lock-ups have been almost entirely overlooked by penal historians, but they are essential for understanding criminal justice at the local level, and the use and experience of imprisonment in British history. **Your Local Lock-Up** at [www.prisonhistory.org/local-lock-up/](http://www.prisonhistory.org/local-lock-up/) is building a national database of surviving or demolished lock-ups and other places of local confinement. This will allow us to explore various aspects of lock-ups’ use, character and design, and enable us to complete the next stage in the recovery of the penal landscape of historic Britain.

To do this, we now need the help of local historians! There are around 650 lock-ups in the database at [www.prisonhistory.org/local-lock-up/](http://www.prisonhistory.org/local-lock-up/), but currently only 2 from Bristol. (The website includes lock-ups at **Thornbury, Westbury–on Trym, Wrington, Pensford, Bath, Banwell, Nailsea, Freshford, Bathford** and so on; Ed.) This is far from exhaustive, and we anticipate that there are countless others around Bristol and Avon we know nothing about. We are therefore calling upon local historians and members of the public to help us recover more lock-ups, and would be very grateful if your members could tell us about any in your area. The project is compiling data on any place or structure used for temporary confinement between the 16th and early 20th centuries; including purpose built lock-ups, police stations, cells in town halls, courthouses, workhouses, stocks and even rooms in pubs used to detain prisoners.

Your members can easily contribute information on a new lock-up directly into the database through an online form at [www.prisonhistory.org/locallock-up/submit-lock-up](http://www.prisonhistory.org/locallock-up/submit-lock-up). Or perhaps they have more details and photographs of somewhere already listed in the database. If so, we would be very grateful for any additions or corrections via the ‘Anything to Add’ button on each lock-up entry. We are also inviting anyone interested in lock-ups and penal history more generally to join our project team to help with research and the development of the database at [www.prisonhistory.org/local-lock-up/become-a-contributor/](http://www.prisonhistory.org/local-lock-up/become-a-contributor/)

**Your Local Lock-Up** is interested in collecting many different types of evidence on lock-ups, and especially welcomes historic and present-day descriptions of structures or their uses, and pictures. It need not be written evidence, either. We are equally keen to hear anecdotes about incidents involving the lock-up, the prisoners held there and the location of any



that are now lost.

We are also collecting ‘stories’ of lock-ups or prisons for our new features page, some of which can already be seen at [www.prisonhistory.org/category/stories/](http://www.prisonhistory.org/category/stories/). Could any of your members please contribute a story on the history of a particular institution, prison or lock-up in the local area; the restoration or conversion of a lock-up; local events held there; or accounts of how data from the project is being used?

To increase **Your Local Lock-Up**’s usefulness to local history societies and communities, every lock-up entry in the database includes a ‘print’ button, which generates a ready-made pamphlet containing information and an image that can be displayed or distributed. Please do let us know if this facility is of use to your society and members, and whether there are any additional features that you would find valuable on the site. We need your feedback to develop this resource further!

Finally, why not connect with **Prison History UK** on social media? Your members can follow us on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/prisonhistoryuk>), ‘like’ our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/Prison-History-UK-2390455521218014](http://www.facebook.com/Prison-History-UK-2390455521218014)); and share material with us on Instagram ([www.instagram.com/prisonhistoryuk](http://www.instagram.com/prisonhistoryuk)). You can also subscribe directly to our mailing list at [www.prisonhistory.org](http://www.prisonhistory.org) to receive the latest project news and updates.

If you have any queries, or would like further information about **Your Local Lock-Up**, please email Dr Rosalind Crone at [Rosalind.Crone@open.ac.uk](mailto:Rosalind.Crone@open.ac.uk) or myself. We very much look forward to receiving your comments and contributions to this exciting new project.

**Dr Elaine Saunders**, researcher, **Your Local Lock-Up**,  
[www.prisonhistory.org/local-lock-up/](http://www.prisonhistory.org/local-lock-up/) for Dr Rosalind Crone.

## MICK ASTON ARCHAEOLOGY BURSARIES

The late Professor Mick Aston left money in his will to some 20 charities, one of which was ALHA member **Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society**. B&GAS decided to use the money for bursaries to young people to enable them to experience participating in archaeological investigations. Bursaries can be awarded to young people from B&GAS’s area who want to participate in a dig anywhere, and to young people from elsewhere who want to participate in a dig in B&GAS’s area, which includes **South Gloucestershire and Bristol**. So far B&GAS has awarded two bursaries. One was to a pupil at a **Bristol** school, who had a place to read archaeology at a university, to enable him to get practical experience on a dig in Cyprus. The other was to a student from **Bath**, already on an archaeology degree course, to enable her to join a dig in Gloucestershire. B&GAS encourages applications. Details on the B&GAS website at <https://www.bgas.org.uk/about/aston.html>.

## PRINCE ALBERT

*Jan Packer* draws attention to the Royal Collection Trust website, <https://albert.rct.uk/>. The Prince Albert collection contains hundreds of items relating to queen Victoria’s consort, considered by many to have been an important and under-recognised influence on English manufacturing, culture and taste. Francis Albert Augustus Charles Emmanuel’s connections with our area have yet to be explored. There is a Prince Albert pub in **east Bristol** (which he is not known to have frequented: anyone know when it was named?) but he did attend the launch of the *SS Great Britain* at **Wapping wharf**. The collection shows how wide his interests extended, especially as regards the application of science and the arts to manufacturing, hence his involvement in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and in the reform of universities and the





educational system. The website has a search facility, which returns 4 references to **Bristol**, three of which are about a painting once at Leigh Court in **Abbots Leigh**; the other is a newspaper cutting reporting a meeting of the Archaeological Institute at Bristol. Search returns over 100 references to **Bath**, but not the city. It would be interesting to explore how far the prince of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha indirectly influenced what happened in our area: his interests ranged wide. The special supplement issued by the *Bristol Mirror* to commemorate the *SS GB* launch would be a good place to start.

## **BRISTOL AND AVON FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

### **Family History Fair in Bristol**

*Geoff Gardner writes:* Attention all family history enthusiasts and those thinking about starting on their research. Put **Saturday 28 September 2019** in your diary. The **Bristol & Avon Family History Society** will be holding its Family History Fair at **British Aerospace Welfare Association (BAWA) Leisure Centre, 589 Southmead Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7RG**.

The day will be an opportunity for anyone who needs help or advice on family history matters to have **face-to-face sessions with local experts and representatives** of **Bristol & Avon Family History Society** and other societies including Devon, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Hampshire, Dorset, Somerset & Dorset, Weston-super-Mare & District, and Wiltshire. Over 30 exhibitors have signed up to attend.

Representatives from **Bath and Bristol Archives** will be on hand to give information and advice. A number of local history societies and museums will also be attending to allow visitors to gather more information on the work and living conditions that their ancestors may have experienced. New and second-hand books, postcards, maps, family history CDs, software and accessories will be available from a range of commercial exhibitors.

**Bristol & Avon FHS** itself will be launching its **new CD of transcriptions and indexes of Bristol Apprentices Books** in Bristol Archives covering the period 1532 to 1724.

There will be introductory talks on *Starting your F.H. Research* and *Using the Internet*. These will be aimed at those who want to get started on researching their families. These will start at **10.30 a.m.** and attenders will be given **free** informative handouts, magazines and other useful research and recording tools.

There will be a number of other talks during the day, the subjects including the Suffragette movement and its importance in the Bristol / Bath area, Canadian Research, Irish Heritage, tracing *Windrush* roots, and identifying military uniforms and medals. There will also be an updated presentation of the *Know Your Place West of England Historic Mapping Project*, the project which started in Bristol but which now covers historic Gloucestershire, Somerset, Devon and Wiltshire as well as Bristol and Bath. The talk will be tailored to how the mapping system can be used in family history research. Full details of talks and times will be advertised nearer the date.

The prizes in the free raffle include subscriptions to commercial websites and publications, DNA kits and books.

**Doors open at 10.00 a.m. and admission is £2.00, children FREE.** This gives access to the Fair, entrance to all talks and the free raffle. The Fair closes at 4.00 p.m. There is ample free parking. A range of refreshments will be available or you can bring your own. If you have an interest in, or a question about, your family's history this is an event you cannot afford to miss. For more information, a full list of exhibitors and details of the talks please visit the B&A FHS website: [www.bafhs.org.uk](http://www.bafhs.org.uk)

## ARCHAEOLOGY AT PRIOR PARK

The National Trust is conducting archaeological investigations at **Prior Park, Bath**. More at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events/44086da6-e1c3-4026-866c-f2d3a5e75e45/pages/details>

## CHEW MAGNA HOARD

The British Museum has published details of the hoard of over 2,500 silver coins of Harold II and William I found by metal detector users at **Chew Magna** in January 2019. Some information and images at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-somerset-49487078>. Speculation at <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2019/aug/28/huge-hoard-norman-coins-reveals-millennium-old-tax-scam>; and <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/treasure-hunters-find-hoard-coins-3261080>



The Roman Baths Museum at Bath has expressed interest in acquiring them, assuming the coroner declares them to be treasure trove, which seems likely.

## BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS NOTICED

AJ Webb, ed., *Handlist of Somerset probate inventories and administrators' accounts 1482-1924*, Somerset Record Society 2019, £16.

Jeff Lucas and Thilo Gross, *From Brycgstow to Bristol in 45 bridges*, Bristol Books 2019, £18. <https://www.bristolbooks.org/>

Eugene Byrne and Tony Forbes, *Homes for heroes 100*, 24pp comic book and illustrated text account of **Bristol's** council housing, free from Bristol public libraries, Harbourside tourist information centre, City Hall, Bristol cathedral shop, and the telephone box by Addison's oak on **Sea Mills Square**. [www.ideasfestival.co.uk/themes/homes-for-heroes-100](http://www.ideasfestival.co.uk/themes/homes-for-heroes-100). Highly recommended: fun as well as serious, and has a bibliography and directions to sources.

Graham Mullan, 'Aveline's Hole: a place for the dead,' article in *British Archaeology* September – October 2019 24-25, referring to RJ Schulting, T Booth, S Brace and others, 'Aveline's Hole: an unexpected twist in the tale,' article in *Proceedings of the University of*

Bristol Spelaeological Society 28.1 (2019) and <https://ubss.org.uk/slaes.php>. **Burrington Coombe**, and links with John Skinner, rector of **Camerton** in the early 19th century.

Catherine Pitt, ‘The original influencers’, article in *The Bristol Magazine* 182 (August 2019) 21-24. Short biographies of Janet Vaughan, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, Albion Banerji, Norah Fry, Wm Tierney Clark, Sarah Ann Henley, Isaac Rosenberg, Victoria Hughes, Charles G Stephens, Ethel Phyllis Bedells, John Addington Symonds, Emma Head (Parker) Edwin Cole, Alice Chestre, Eddie Hapgood, Edmund Blanket, Sarah Bright, John Sutton, Sarah Belzoni (Bane), Robert Fitzharding and Nipper the HMV dog.

Adrian Webb and Andrew Butcher, ed., *Writing the history of Somerset: family, community and religion; essays in honour of Robert Dunning*. Halsgrove, 2018, hb £16.99. Contains an essay by Dr Joe Bettey, ‘A Somerset gentleman and landowner: Thomas Smyth of Ashton Court, **Long Ashton** 1609-1642;’ and one by Adrian Webb, ‘New light on William Day of **Blagdon**, land surveyor, cartographer, and linen draper.’ Includes a bibliography of RD’s writings, many of which touch on the Somerset part of our area.

## COMMENTARY AND RESPONSES

### Urban design

Plans for a 36-home redevelopment at Astry Close in **Lawrence Weston, Bristol** <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/local-news/heart-space-housing-development-set-3190820> ; <https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/news/community-led-housing-proposals-for-lawrence-weston/> are reported to include a ‘heart space’ to include a children’s play area with a slider and facilities for people to meet and socialise. Not often does small-scale urban design get in the news.

Local history people might be prompted to ponder how far urban design has featured in our area’s past, and how far it has determined what we live in today. Some places have grown gradually and incrementally – some would say organically and naturally – with buildings being put up or knocked down and the built-up area extended or altered as local needs changes or initiatives were taken. This happened without deliberate planning. If the results are sometimes pleasant to look at, they are accidental, not intended. Other places are the result of conscious decisions, sometimes preceded by thought, to design the environment so as to create a particular visual or social effect.

Nowadays we think of urban design as being done by specialist architects and planners, who are usually self-employed consultants or employees of a local authority. But the practice of urban design goes back a long way, and has appeared, disappeared, and come back again over time. Several of the settlements in our area, as elsewhere, started in the medieval period with the planned laying out of new towns. Examples include **Chipping Sodbury** (1218, ably explained by John Chandler at ALHA’s 2017 local history day), **Marshfield** (1234), **Midsomer Norton** (1242), **Hawkesbury** (1252), and **Keynsham** (1303, an entrepreneurial venture by Keynsham abbey following the success of its investment at **Marshfield**). The founder of the settlement organised the laying out of new streets and allocated burgage plots fronting on to them, accompanied by a chartered market. In those places, and also in towns like **Thornbury**, the street pattern continues today. A medieval inhabitant teleported into the present time might puzzle over nail bars and zebra crossings but would recognise the road layout and the massing of buildings.

A different sort of urban design made the squares and crescents of **Bath**, where the design came from landowners and their contractors and architects cashing in on fashion and the availability of local stone. In **Clifton** the motives were different, the Society of Merchant Venturers attempting to contrive an aura of superiority and privilege, hence the SMV’s



insistence on the Clifton Rocks Railway being linked to an upmarket spa hotel as Maggie Shapland explained in her much appreciated presentation at ALHA's 2019 local history day. The course of urban design in Clifton differed from the way things were done in Bath, in that in Clifton the SMV as landowner controlled the design of individual buildings, but did not lay out roads or prescribe uniform design criteria. Hence the scrappy piecemeal look of Clifton compared with the sweeping uniformities of Bath.

Some urban design resulted from clearance of whole areas of land. In Bristol, Victoria Street through **St Thomas** and **Temple** was designed to destroy an unprepossessing area which offended the aesthetic sensibilities of Clifton residents going to and from the centre of the city and its awkwardly placed railway station. Bath corporation similarly redeveloped the **Avon Street** and **Kingsmead** areas. Years before the expression 'social cleansing' was invented, both corporations redesigned areas where slums had been cleared. Bristol's **Broadmead** shopping area was conceived and planned comprehensively after wholesale clearance; as was the extension into **Cabot Circus**, though with different motives, and with assumptions about public demand for shops which now seem misplaced. Bombing facilitated comprehensive redevelopment, and that allowed comprehensive design.

Large scale council housing estates involved urban design. The earliest estates were influenced by Ebenezer Howard's garden cities movement. Their traces can still be seen in **Sea Mills**, less so in later estates, but all had carefully planned road layouts, public open spaces, shopping areas, and facilities like health centres and libraries designed in. Later, tower blocks of flats in **Redcliffe** had facilities like a nursery and a doctor's surgery included, deliberately, by design.



Not all pieces of urban design have lasted long. Bristol's **St James's Square** is no more, but **Queen Square** and **King Square** have survived, as has **Queen Square in Bath** and **Ellenborough Park in Weston-super-mare**. In the 1960s Bristol city council planned to remodel the area **between Broadmead and the Centre** with pedestrian walkways at first floor level. Some of the bridge abutments and other traces

survive, but the rest has gone. Some would say that so long as councillors' thinking is dominated by the needs of road transport, and in particular the electoral influence of the private car, any urban design is bound to be temporary.

Urban design has not confined its attention to bricks and mortar, glass and concrete. One of the striking features of council estates is their green space and their trees, which were not part of the slumscape from which many of the first residents came. The garden cities movement made sure of that. Even private sector developments incorporated trees. In Linden Road in **Westbury Park** the lime trees have now gone, the last being uprooted in the 1987 gales, but **Stoke Bishop's** blossom trees continue to give pleasure, and not just to dogs.



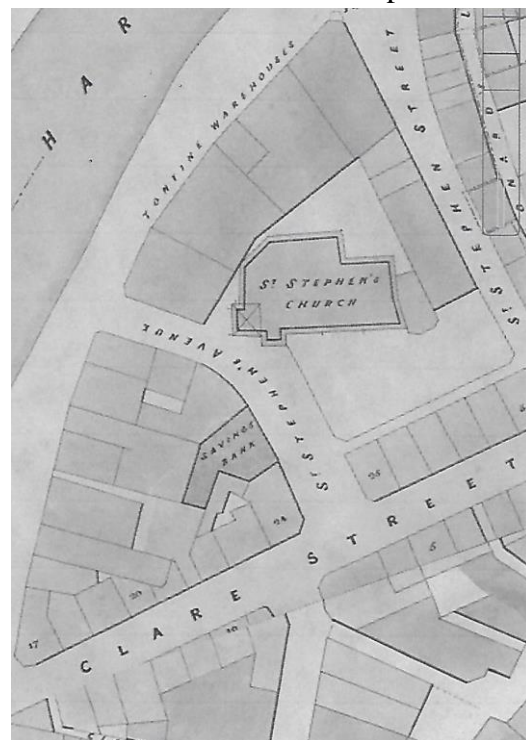
## You can bet your life on it

Now that so many projects by local authorities and charities are financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other agencies that distribute the surpluses from the national raffle, we have become accustomed to the idea that projects can be funded by gambling. Depending on how you define gambling, the idea is not new: life insurance, the proceeds of which can be used to pay off a mortgage on a house, can be seen as a bet between the insured and the insurer over how long the insured will live, or whether the insured will survive to a given date. Similarly an occupational pension or annuity can be construed as a bet between the pensioner and the pension fund or its actuary.

One method of financing not dissimilar to a lottery was the tontine. (Its inventor or promulgator was a 17th century Italian banker called Tonti). Participants would subscribe funds for a project, such as building a factory. The subscribers' money funded the cost of buying the land and putting up the building. The terms of subscription were that the subscribers became joint owners of the building; when one subscriber died, his or her share would lapse; so that over time ownership of the property became vested in fewer and fewer subscribers, until there was only one left. A participator who died early would get nothing further out of the tontine and nothing to leave to anyone else: the last survivor or survivors would clean up: winner takes all. A term of the tontine might be that until all but the last survivor died, surviving subscribers would receive a share of the rent from any tenant of the building, or a share in the profits of any business carried on there, and they might receive interest on their initial investment. The tontine was one way of providing for unmarried aunts. And you never knew your luck.

Latimer mentions several tontines in his *Annals of Bristol in the eighteenth century*. In 1756 The New Music Room in **Prince Street** opened with a performance of Handel's *Messiah*. It had been started as a tontine in 1753, financed by 120 shares of £30 each, the property to vest in the last three surviving lives, the original idea being to lease land in Prince Street from the corporation and erect an assembly room. In 1761 a tontine was devised to fund the erection of stables in **Backfields off Stokes Croft**. 95 citizens subscribed £30 each, the property to vest in the last two survivors. In 1783 a tontine was started to complete warehouses built **on the quay** where St Stephen's Lane came out near St Stephen's church. It had 195 subscribers and ended about 1850. This must be the Tontine Warehouses, completed in 1785 on The Quay: Piggott's *Gloucestershire Directory* of 1830 and Matthews's *Directory* for 1851 list firms as trading there; they are shown on Ashmead's map of 1855 (viewable on *Know Your Place*, from which the map extract is copied), and were demolished in the 1930s. Not all tontines were successful: one in 1784 to build houses in **Great George Street** failed. So did one formed in 1792 to complete **York Crescent in Clifton**, financed by £70,000 in £100 shares. That sounds over-ambitious, and the participators were not to know that they could hardly have chosen a worse time to sink capital into a Clifton building venture, but small tontines also failed to get off the ground, such as one formed to raise £14,000 to complete **King's Parade**.

Tontines were not confined to **Bristol**.



There is a Tontine Street in Folkestone, Tontine Buildings (a canal hotel built 1772) in Stourport, and a Tontine Hotel (1805) in Greenock. The device was used in America. Other local examples would be welcome.

### **Potholes and railways**

In his book *The national debt: a short history* (Hurst 2018) Martin Slater says that in the nineteenth century when the railways arrived, ‘local authorities allowed roads to deteriorate.’ The author does not cite evidence for that, but in principle it seems plausible as a generalised statement of what happened in the nation as a whole: as more and more passengers and goods shifted from road to rail, there would have been less wear and tear on road surfaces, so less money would have been needed for their upkeep.

The local picture will have been more complicated, and it would be interesting to test how far MS’s proposition applied in our area. Traffic will have shifted from road to rail only if a rail route was available. In our area in the early 1840s that will have meant that some traffic between **Bath and Bristol** (1840) and between **Bristol and Exeter** (1844) and **Gloucester** (1844) will have shifted to rail, but elsewhere not until the railway arrived. **Weston-super-mare** had a horse-drawn branch line from 1841; **Clevedon** was linked in 1847; **Portishead** in 1863, and the **Filton, Patchway, Pilning and New Passage** line opened the same year. The line **from Bristol to Bath through Mangotsfield and Bitton** was not complete until 1869, the same year that the strawberry line reached **Congresbury, Sandford and Woodborough**. **Thornbury** got its rail link in 1872. Not until 1873 did the Bristol & North Somerset line put stations at **Brislington, Pensford, Hallatrow and Clutton** with a link to **Radstock**. The Somerset and Dorset route from **Bath** opened 1874. **Camerton** did not get its station until 1882. Until the station or goods yard opened, and in places the railway did not serve, one imagines that road traffic continued much as before, so wear and tear on the roads would not have changed.

The opening of a station or goods yard altered the pattern of local traffic. Carriers and hauliers changes their routes, or introduced new ones, to and from stations and goods yards. That will have increased the traffic, and hence the wear and tear, on some roads. At **Wickwar** farmers brought livestock to the station for transport elsewhere; as the farmers congregated, they took the opportunity to do business, and a non-chartered market formed, which in turn generated more road traffic. At **Thornbury** the coming of the railway was one of the factors influencing changes in the siting of the market, and that in turn will have altered local traffic patterns.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the local economy of our area was not buoyant. It was still recovering from the draining effects of 22 years of war with France, and events like the **Bristol** riots of 1831 did not help. From 1835 trade was boosted by the compensation received by slave-owners, some of which went into the Great Western enterprises – the steamship, the railway, and the cotton mill at **Barton Hill** – and those enterprises will have created jobs in shipbuilding, engineering and the building trades. But as Peter Malpass points out in his *The making of victorian Bristol*, the local economy did not really take off until 1860 or so. So when the railways started arriving in the 1840s, there will have been pressures to keep local rates down, and (outside towns that had local boards of health and improvement commissioners) that may have led to parishes, and the JPs who supervised them, spending less on road maintenance.

Not until 1936 did trunk roads become a national as distinct from local responsibility, so there will have been local political pressures to keep down or reduce the amount spent on maintaining roads. To dig out the local detail would be useful.

## QUOTE

*John Stevens contributes* the opening of *A Legend of Maryland* by John Pendleton Kennedy (1795-1870):

The framework of modern history is, for the most part, constructed out of the material supplied by the national transactions described in official documents and contemporaneous records. Forms of government and their organic changes, the succession of those who have administered them, their legislation, wars, treaties and the statistics demonstrating their growth or decline, - these are the elements that furnish the outlines of history. They are the dry timbers of a vast old edifice; they impose a dry study on the antiquary and are still more dry to his reader. But that which makes history the richest of philosophies and the most genial pursuit of humanity is the spirit that is breathed into it by the thoughts and feelings of former generations, interpreted in actions and incidents that disclose the passions, motives and ambition of men, and open to us a view of the actual life of our forefathers.

## CAN YOU HELP?

### SHIREHAMPTON'S MYSTERY CULVERT

Helen Potgieter would be grateful for any information about the brick- and tile-lined culvert that runs mainly along Pembroke Road, **Shirehampton**, Bristol. 'I would love to know how old it is, what its purpose is and where it originates and finally ends. It has no connections to any properties so therefore cannot be a sewer, hence Wessex water is not involved. Please also note the significant 'void' or cave that joins the culvert.' [Helen.potgieter@btinternet.com](mailto:Helen.potgieter@btinternet.com) , 0773 270 4319.

### EDITH FROST

ALHA member **Stoke Bishop Local History** has received the following request:

'I wondered if anyone might know/have known the Frost family in Bristol. I'm interested in finding out specifically about MISS EDITH FROST who was awarded the King Christian X of Denmark's Freedom Medal for propaganda work she did during WW2. Miss Frost was a Bristol Soroptimist and was President in 1948-1949. The information is for a book to celebrate Bristol Soroptimists' centenary next year. I would be most grateful if anyone is able to help with any information.

She was a director of Frost and Reed Gallery in Clare Street. She lived with her sister Eleanor (also a spinster) at Hill Side, Bridge Road, **Clifton**. I understand that one of the reasons for the medal (only 3,000 given and one recipient was Churchill) was related to an exhibition in April 1945 named "Fighting Denmark". Apparently Queen Mary came to the gallery in Bristol to see it.'

Any information would be gratefully received by Jenny Weeks,  
[jenny.weeks.mail@gmail.com](mailto:jenny.weeks.mail@gmail.com)

### LOCAL LOCK-UPS

Request under **PRISONS** above, under **EVENTS AND SOURCES**.

### ALHA GRANTS PANEL

Request under **ALHA items** above.